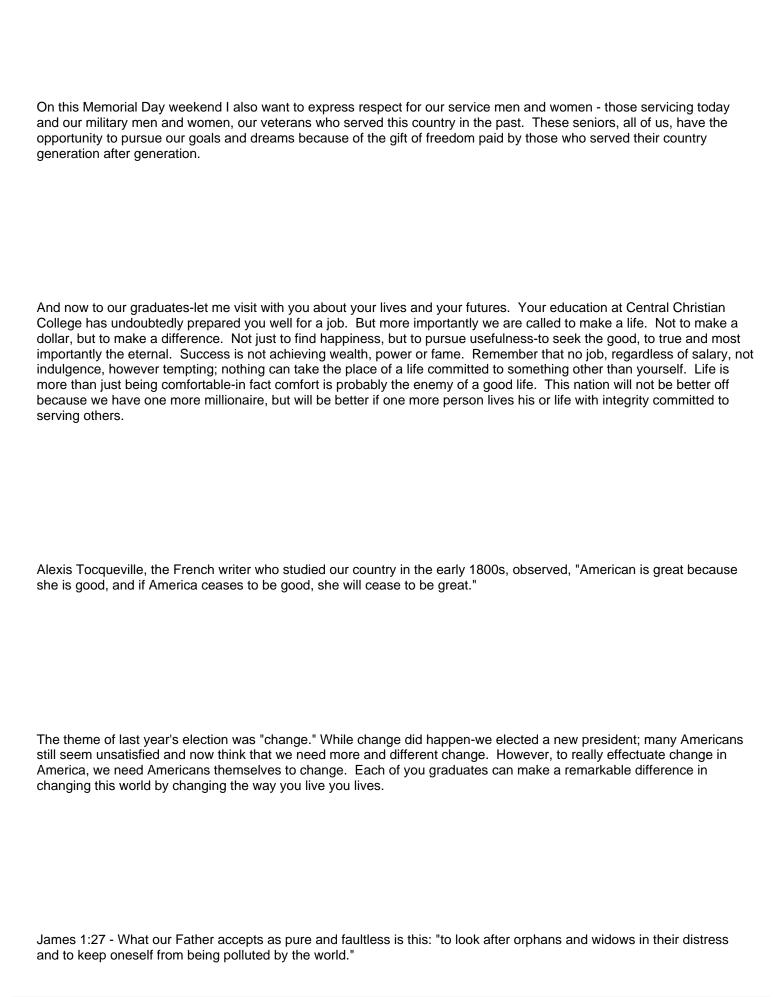
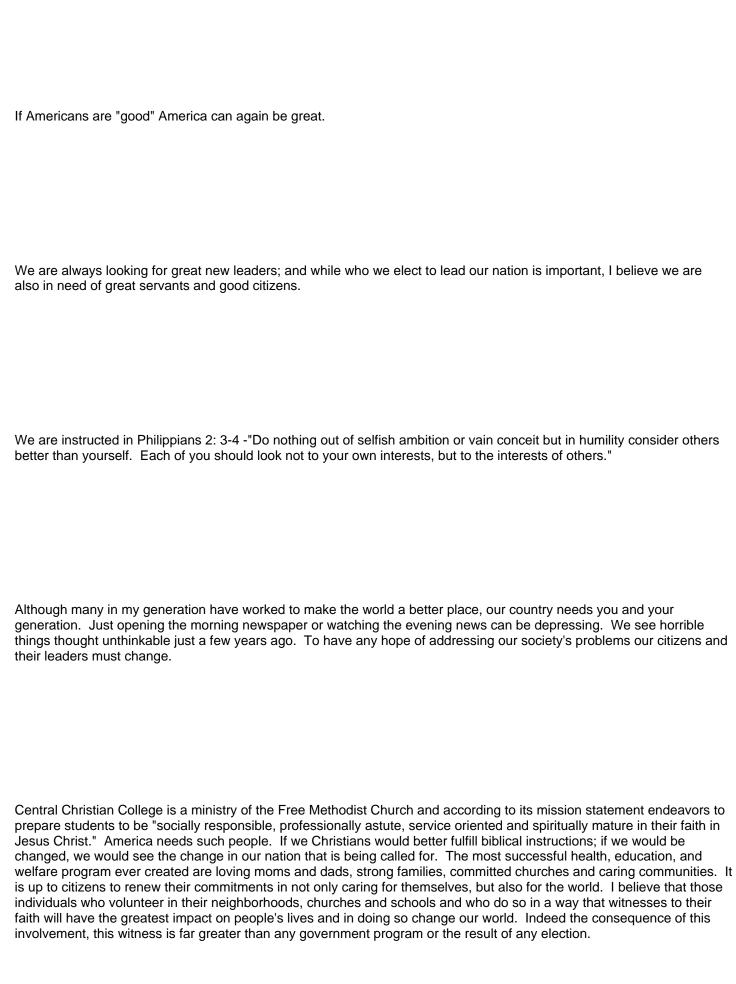
5/23/2009 Central Christian College Graduation

Central Christian College Graduation May 23, 2008 President Alexander, faculty and staff, graduates and parents, I am honored to join you today. Every association I have had with Central Christian College has left me with the belief that this college is truly a special institution of higher learning. Addressing a graduating class is a difficult task. It is difficult to express the meaning of life or to describe what success is. I suppose, in an attempt to make me more comfortable, I've been told not to worry, "Almost no one will be listening and those that do won't remember what you said." So I guess I feel a little better. Before addressing the graduates, let me first visit with some others that helped make this day possible. First, let me recognize moms and dads. If you ask these seniors who had the most influence on their lives, not one would say "my Congressman." Most likely they would indicate their parents. Few things in life are more important than our jobs as moms and dads. Parents, thank you for all you have done to help your sons and daughters reach this point in their lives. For you this means turning a page as well. As your son or daughter moves on, you can take pride in knowing you have helped them take an important step forward. I also want to recognize the role of educators - the other people these seniors mention as making a difference in their lives. Central Christian College has been blessed with excellent faculty, many who have changed students' lives in important ways - educators who taught not only facts and figures, but also instilled a love for learning. So today I acknowledge the teachers who helped mold these lives. I hope all teachers find satisfaction in knowing that they have made a tremendous difference in the lives of these seniors. There is no more important, no more noble profession than

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teaching.





From my own experience I can tell you that satisfaction does not come from economic well being, status or power in our nation's capital. There is nothing in my background that would suggest that I would grow up to become a Congressman---no financial or political heritage in my family-my Dad worked in the oil fields of Western Kansas and my Mom was the lady you paid your electric bill to in my small hometown of Plainville, Kansas. I am a first generation college graduate that happened to find politics and government interesting. So I set a goal of being a member of the United States House of Representatives. With the help of a great many people I succeeded in reaching that goal thirteen years ago. Being elected to Congress was something I really wanted and a sense of great satisfaction should have followed my election. Despite my electoral success, something was missing. When we set goals for ourselves, if these goals are materialistic or driven by ego, even when the goal is met, we are left feeling unsatisfied. For satisfaction in life comes not in meeting the goals we establish for ourselves; but instead living a life in accordance with God's will-satisfying His plan for our lives.

Psalm 25: 4-5	
Show me Your ways, O Lord;	
Teach me Your paths.	
Lead me in Your truth and teach me,	
For You are the God of my salvation.	

Through prayer I came to understand that I had been granted an opportunity to be of service to others. I was not elected to office to elevate my standing in the world or to satisfy my ego, but rather to the best of my ability to live a life in service to God, following His plan. Graduates please recognize that success comes not from the things that we accumulate, but by living a life following God's will in service to others. Face the future with the realization that you can make a difference and that the change we desire in our nation comes in part from what we do as individuals.

We have nothing to fear. As the great hymn tells us.
Great is thy faithfulness
Morning by morning new mercies I see
All I have needed thy great hand hath provided
Great is thy faithfulness
Lord unto me
You have every right to be hopeful for your lives and futures. The world is a large and wonderful place and it is your time to step into it. You are armed with your college education and the character bred into you by family, faculty and friends. You are poised at the threshold of the rest of your life. The challenges are large and the way uncertain, the responsibilities enormous and our own abilities are limited.
Our small voice tells God, "I don't know where we are going."
And God answers: "We are going forward, into the future I have shaped for you."
"But I don't know where that is"

And God answers: "I do; let's go."
"But I am afraid"
And God says: "Of course you are. Any sensible person would be. Let's go."
And we say, "But can I do all that is given me to do?"
And God says: "I have mad you, I am with you to the end. Take my hand. Let's go."
So as you graduate, you being today with the God who made you, you walk with the God who guides you and you find completion with the God who loves you.
We need a chance to change the world. And God has always given us that. I hope that 2009 is a year of change. Our challenges are significant. But go with the knowledge that God is with you.
Congratulations and best wish to the Class of 2009. May God bless you was you work to achieve His will for your lives.